



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS CONFIRMED IN HORSE *First Horse This Year in County with Deadly Virus*

The first case this year of West Nile virus in a San Diego County horse has been confirmed in a 14-year-old Arab-mix mare in Bonsall, County officials said today.

Currently seven birds have been found infected with the virus in San Diego. Last year one horse and five birds tested positive for West Nile virus.

"Horse owners are urged to vaccinate their horses against West Nile virus and to make sure their vaccines are current," said County Veterinarian Dr. Kerry Mahoney. "61 out of the 63 horses in California that have tested positive for the virus were not current with their vaccinations."

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), which tests and confirms the virus in horses, recommends that horses receive boosters every 6 months. The Bonsall horse was euthanized July 25 due to severe symptoms of weakness, inability to stand and thrashing.

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease that can be transmitted to humans and horses by infected mosquitoes. Signs of the disease in horses include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching or inability to stand. A veterinarian should be consulted if a horse is exhibiting these signs.

All residents should take precautions to control mosquitoes by draining unnecessary standing water. Water tanks can be stocked with mosquito fish that consume mosquito larvae. The fish are available for free from County Vector Control. People and horses should minimize time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk and use approved mosquito repellants containing DEET.

For more information about the West Nile virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site at www.SDFighttheBite.com.